

A  
Second Letter  
TO A  
B I S H O P  
From A  
MINISTER  
OF HIS  
DIOCESS.



(F. W.)

L O N D O N,  
Printed in the Year MDCXCII.

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TO A  
BISHOP  
From A  
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LONDON

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My Lord,

Since my last of *October 26, 1691*, which you were pleased to thank me for, and to publish, I received your Lordship's Commands by *Mr. H.* to add what hath since occurred to my Mind, concerning the same matter; and more particularly you require me to lay before you those common Causes of the greatest of our Evils, and the most powerful Remedies for the removing them. Since that time I have been hindred by a dangerous Sicknes, the effects whereof I have not as yet got clear of: Besides this, when I had recovered to some small degree of Health, I met with other things which unavoidably hindred me from obeying your Lordship's Commands. And having been thus long restrained, I believe I had not entertained any farther Thoughts of this matter, had I not by your Lordship's Letter, of *Feb. 27.* last past, been vehemently urged to add what I had farther to say upon this occasion.

What I now trouble your Lordship with, is perfectly in obedience to your Commands, and the freedom I shall use proceeds from the same cause: For tho' I have had ancient acquaintance

with your Lordship in the University, yet that would not excuse the Liberty I take, had I not been *obliged* by your *Authority*, as well as *secured* by your *Friendship*.

It is a very unpleasant thing to find fault, and especially to me who know my own faults so well, that I cannot tell how to make severe Reflections upon others. I am under no Discontent, I desire no Preferment, am of no Party, and have no ill-will to any Man living: Besides, I know 'tis very often an argument of a weak Mind, to cry out of the *present* time, and commend the *past*: And therefore I find my self *uneasie* under this *Task*.

But when I consider to *whom* I write, and for *what end*, I cannot refuse to say something. For tho' I take no pleasure in seeing *Wounds*, and raking into *Sores*, yet I should be too *nice* and *uncharitable* also, should I refuse this where I had any prospect of working a *Cure*. The Eyes of good Men are upon the Lords the Bishops at this time, and 'tis greatly hoped you will be Repairers of our Breaches; and you will greatly disappoint the just expectations of the wise and good if ye be not. In view whereof I shall offer those things which follow in this Paper. And I shall complain of no Evils but such as the Bishops, by their united Counsels and Endeavours,



deavours, by their Interest and their Influence, may in great measure remove. I say in *great measure*; for certain it is, that they cannot be altogether removed. Some of them are such, as when they are once admitted, they are not to be cured, but are like Errors in the *first* Concoction, that are not to be amended *afterwards*. However this may be done; they may be for the future prevented, and the present Set of Bishops may leave the Nation in a much better case than they found it. The Particulars which I humbly lay before your Lordship are these that follow.

I. The care of *Schools*. There are a considerable Number of these in your Lordship's Diocese, and some of them well endowed; your Lordship hath the Choice of one of the Masters, and the Approbation of several; and none of them can Teach without a License from you. I hope many of the Masters of these Schools discharge themselves well; 'tis of great moment they should all do so. I must needs say, I fear they do not. I once took an occasion to spend some time in Examining one of them, at the request of some Friends, whose Children were placed there for their better Instruction, and of one of the Governours of it. I was greatly surprized to find the Charity of the Pious Founder abused,

abused, and the honest Design of the Parents of so many Children disappointed. I'll tell your Lordship nothing but matter of Fact. In that great School there were not above two that understood any thing of their Grammar, even among those who had been there above three Years. The first Rudiments were never taught them with care; and, for want of that, all the after-care imported nothing, and did but make the Children weary, and render the School a Prison to them. I hoped, at least, I should have found them instructed in Religion; but they were so far from it, that they were not Taught any Catechism at all by their Master, who never prayed with them, nor took any care of their Souls. You cannot imagine what an Affliction this was to me. There must be some Remedy found out for this great Evil.

Upon this Occasion I humbly lay before you the following Particulars:

1. That there might be from time to time some certain and fixed times appointed for the strict Examination of all publick Schools; This is practised with good success in many great Schools, especially about the City of London: If this were done with great care, and openly, you would soon find the good effects of it. I could

could tell your Lordship where one of the best Schools in England had been utterly ruined; had it not been for this Care. The Governours of it, upon this publick Examination, removed the negligent Master, and placed another; who, by his great Care and Diligence, restored it from a very low Condition to a most flourishing one. 'Twill be no hard matter for your Lordship to accomplish this. And you may find Men of Probity who will undertake this trouble, and give you a faithful account. But then they must enquire not only into the Learning, but Manners of the Scholars also; and what care hath been taken to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! I need not acquaint your Lordship how much the Publick is concerned in this matter. The timely Care of their Morals may save many Souls, and prevent unspeakable Mischiefs which flow from want of an early and wise Discipline.

2. That for the future all possible Care be taken, that Men of great Probity be chosen Masters of Schools. Where the Bishops nominate and approve, and, indeed, generally in all great Schools, this Care may be taken. The main Care is, that the Master of a School be a Person of great Probity, a Man of Vertue and Integrity.

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Yet Learning here is not to be despised; where it may be had, but not so much to be insisted on; For 'tis not necessary as Probity is. A little Learning with great Diligence, wise Discipline, good Temper, and hearty Love of God and Religion, is preferable to the greatest measure of Learning. I have known several Country School-Masters, that had very little Learning themselves, that have had flourishing Schools, and some of the greatest Men this Age hath known have been bred under them. But then they have been Men of great Wisdom, and most exact Discipline; their Piety hath been great, and their Lives exemplary; and their Youth (like *Jacob's Lambs*) have from what they saw in their Master's Lives, and from that goodly Idea of Religion which they laid before them, conceived aright, and been formed into a Conformity to the excellent Pattern laid in their way. I have the honour to know some Persons of Quality of singular Vertue, that do own the good which they received this way.

II. The Care of the *Universities*. This Care perhaps may not be thought to belong to the Bishops, but to the Heads of Houses, and Fellows of Colleges. But still it must be granted, that the united Endeavours of the Bishops may  
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do much in this matter. For some of them are Heads of Colleges themselves, others of them are Visitors of them, and many of them have a great Influence upon those Heads and Fellows as they are Deans or Dignitaries of their Churches, Chaplains in their Families, and have their Dependencies or Expectances from them. And very certain it is, that the want of good Discipline in the University is the Source of unspeakable Mischief to the whole Kingdom. For want of due Care in this Matter the Gentry have been corrupted, at least not improved; The Country hath been filled with ignorant and indiscreet Ministers and Curates; The People have taken occasion to forsake our Church; Schism hath been continued, and is like to be so; There are those who durst not trust their Children there, and therefore have chosen to send them to *St. Omers*, or else have commended them to the Care of Dissenters who have taught Schools, and undertaken to Instruct them in the University Learning; By this means they have been prejudiced against the Church of *England*, and many of them become the professed Enemies of it. I am under no temptation to speak hardly of our Universities, having had a Relation to both of them, and also being under great Obligations

to them. But yet I cannot but say that their Discipline of late Years hath been very lax; I have been sometimes desired to recommend a Number of young Gentlemen to the Care of Tutors, and have found it a very difficult Task to place them safely. 'Tis notorious, and not to be concealed; I have in passing through one of them, heard more Oaths sworn by the Students, and more of them in or coming out of a Tavern, than I had observed while I lived there in many Years time. I make no doubt but some in each University have used great Care. But yet this could not avail much, when the greater Number were negligent; And some of the Governing part gave Example of great Intemperance by frequenting Taverns, or appointing drinking Clubs in their Colleges. I know very well both the Men, and Places where they met, and did not only debauch themselves but reproached better Men than themselves over their Bottles, as Men not true to the Interest of their Church. The young Scholars were in the mean time neglected, permitted to frequent publick Houses daily, and not called to a strict account of their Studies or Manners. The Exercises required by the Statute have been huddled over, or bought off; Degrees given without any merit; Preferments bestowed by Friendship,

ship, and Letters of great Persons ; The Charity of Pious Benefactors perverted ; Offices both publick and in particular Colleges not performed, tho the Salary were received ; Preferments kept that were inconsistent with the Local Statutes ; The Studious and Vertuous have been disheartned ; Eating and drinking to excess hath been the practice for many Years ; I could say much more, and am very sure I could prove it also. I had rather proceed to offer at some Remedy ; I lay before your Lordship the following Particulars.

(I.) That the first Care should be to make the *Universities* Nurseries of *Piety* and *Vertue*. The *Learning* which the young Student gets will do him or the World little good if his *Morals* be not secured : And indeed if his *Vertue* be preserved, he is in a fairer way to get *Learning* also. This ought to be the first and greatest Care ; I wish it were not upon the matter wholly neglected. Your Lordship remembers the Words of *Socrates* before *Hippias*. 'Tis ( says he ) a wonderful thing, that *Xenoph.* whereas if a man would put one out to learn a *Mem. l. IV.* Trade or Art, he may easily find a Place where this may be learned ; Nay more, 'tis said, he may easily find those who will teach an Ox or an Horse to



be tractable and useful. But if a Man were himself disposed to learn what is Righteous, or would place out his Son or Servant to be taught it, he would not be able to find where to place himself or them. I believe there is nothing so hard and difficult a matter as to find a School of Vertue. We have often seen those who went innocent to the Universities come thence depraved. And this hath many times happened through want of Care and diligent Application. That part of our Age which we spend there requires the utmost Care, and generally is neglected. There are very many that there have lost their Vertue and Modesty; That have been so far from Improvement there that they have been ruined. 'Twill stand you in hand to procure such a Discipline, and order that it shall be an hard matter for a young Student to miscarry. This will never be whiles they that are sent thither for Institution have the Liberty to live as they list. There must be great Care taken to form their Manners, to possess them with the Fear of God, and Sense of a World to come; To convince them of the Difference of things; to principle them in true Religion, and every Vertuous thing. They must be kept from Wine and Wantonness; inured to Labour and Exercise; restrained from the Conversation of the  
Town;



Town; not suffered to go out of their Walls without leave; They must be strictly kept to Prayers, and taught to pray by themselves; instructed with exact Care for the Holy Sacrament, and kept to frequent Communion; the idle and vicious must be Carefully removed, and all ill Examples taken out of the way. The Heads and Governours of Colleges may with due Care turn their Colleges into Religious Houses; and 'tis hoped your Lordship and the other Bishops will take this Matter into Consideration, and do your utmost toward the effecting it.

(II.) 'Twill be highly fit that the *Heads* and other Governors should be visited. Indeed there are Visitors appointed by the several Founders for some Colleges, and for some Number of them in one of the Universities: But we have not seen any great Fruits of this Power. My meaning is, that some Number of Men should be Commissioned from time to time to Visit both Universities; Men that should be Impowered to *Examine* strictly into Things, and make Report, that the Negligent may be punished severely. I will not undertake to make Articles of Enquiry, but I think I may name some that will be needful, *viz.* *How*  
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*the Estates of the Founder and Benefactors have been dispensed? How the Statutes of the House have been observed? Have the Heads and Governors resided as they ought? Have they kept no Place, nor been possessors of Estates inconsistent with the Statutes of the House? Have all Exercises been duly performed? Diligence and Vertue duly encouraged? What Lives do they lead? And what Account can they give of Themselves and of their Time spent there? What Lectures are read by the Professors and other Lecturers, and whether all be done which the Statute requires? Are those Studies pursued Diligently which tend to make Men useful to the Publick? Are there no unstatutable Fees exacted? No expensive Customs introduced? No unnecessary Eating-Houses allowed? &c.*

Were these things looked into by Men of Authority, were the Criminals severely punished, and some of them that are most Guilty removed; were this done frequently, and with due Care, we should soon see the good Effects of it. There would be another Face of things quickly; Prophaneness and Idleness would skulk presently and soon be banished; and Diligence and Vertue would revive and hold up their Heads. We have now many Men that have spent many Years there in order to serve the Church as they profess; when they come for  
Orders

Orders they have not the Learning of some School-Boys. This I know upon my certain Knowledge, having been employed to Examine them when they offered themselves to be Ordained. I could give your Lordship a great many Instances of those who have not had Skill enough to turn the Creed into true Latine, or an Article of Religion; And a great many others that had some of this Skill, yet had not any Understanding at all of *Theological* Matters; and yet were these Dunces admitted to Degrees, and brought Testimonials under the College Seal. My Lord, you cannot imagine with what Grief I write this: But thus it is; And there must be due Care taken of it.

(III.) These *Visitors* might be of farther Use if they had Orders to require some Publick Exercises whilst they visited; If they were obliged to bring with them a List of the most Pious and Deserving, that should be kept in some publick Place; If they had Power to appoint some Discipline, and revive the Exercises of greatest Use that are now omitted. A great many things might be named under this Head which I forbear. One thing might easily be done, *viz*, The requiring all the Students to  
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ſpeak the Latine Tongue within the Walls of their Houſe with each other. To do it at leaſt at their Meals. I remember well when this was done in a certain College, and with that ſucceſs that many of the Houſe had gained that readineſs, and were arrived to that Elegance that they far exceeded all Foreigners. 'Tis a ſhame Men ſhould be at a loſs in this Matter when every Foreigner hath attained it that knows any thing of Letters.

(IV.) 'Twill be neceſſary that greater Care be taken in beſtowing Degrees to thoſe only who deſerve them. That Testimonials be not given promiſcuouſly; That the Good and Bad have not the ſame Testimony; That a Courſe and Method of Studies be contrived; That there be greater Care taken to encourage *Mathematical* Learning, and thoſe Parts of it eſpecially which are moſt for the Uſe of Life; That thoſe *Theological* Studies be commended which tend to make Men more Serviceable to the Church, and better able to Defend our Common Chriſtianity againſt all Gainſayers; That particular Care be taken to Direct young Students in their Study of the Scriptures.

III. There

III. There ought to be very great Care taken in admitting to *Holy Orders*. And this is a Care peculiarly belonging to the Bishops. The want of this Care hath been attended with unspeakable Mischiefs. The Church groans under them, and is like to do so for some time. The Bishops are the only Judges of the Fitness of Persons that come to be Ordained, and may refuse them that they judge unfit, without any danger of a *quare impedit*, or any other Legal Molestation. But when they are admitted, a Bishop runs an hazard, that refuseth to give them Institution. If another Bishop Ordain an unfit Person, and that Person be presented to your Lordship to a Cure, you will find your self under great Difficulty. If you admit him, you deliver up the Cure of Souls to a Person you do not Approve; If you refuse him, you run the hazard of being sued at Law. Indeed where you have Ordained a Person, you cannot reasonably refuse him Institution when he desires it. But 'tis very hard you should be obliged to Institute him whom another Bishop hath without due Care admitted to Holy Orders. This careless ad-

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mitting Men to Holy Orders, may, by the united Agreement of all the Bishops, be prevented for the future. I need not tell you what good Laws are made on this behalf, and how easie a thing 'twill be for the future to take Care of this Matter. But every Bishop must take the utmost Care, and the Archbishops had need require a strict and constant Account that others do their Duty. For if one Bishop be Careless, as that Bishop will be resorted to and Ordain the greatest Number, so the other Bishops and the Church will suffer greatly by it. I know there have been some Bishops that have been very remiss; And some who have had a small Diocess have had great Ordinations, and that when they lived remote from their Diocess also. This thing must be looked after Diligently; and 'twere well that every Bishop were obliged to give his Metropolitan an Account from time to time of the Number and Qualifications of all those whom he admits into Holy Orders, and of the Places of their abode, &c.

After all, the Bishops had need be Careful that they be not imposed upon with false Titles, (a very common practice) with slight

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Testimonials, and the perfunctory Examination of a Chaplain. He had need Examine them himself, and require them that come for Orders to apply themselves to him some considerable time before-hand, that he may be the better satisfied concerning them. Every wise Man will be very tender in commending a Person as a Servant to his Friend, much more if it be to a Place of any considerable Trust. What Care then ought the Bishops to take when they Commend Men and Admit them to the Service of God, and of his Church, and the tremendous Care of Immortal Souls? The utmost Care in this Matter will be little enough. And were this Care taken by all the Bishops, we should soon see the blessed Fruits of it; young Men would ply their Studies, and take care of their Lives, and form themselves to some shew at least of Seriousness in Religion. I know very well a certain excellent Prelate that hath in this Matter used Exemplary Care and Diligence, and I am told, by one that knows, the good Effects of it too. There are very few but have competently fitted themselves before they have offered themselves to him: And for the Idle and Negli-



gent, that have heard of many such refused, they have endeavoured with all their Skill to find means to be admitted into Holy Orders by some other hand. A due Care of this Matter would go a great way in that Reformation which all good Men desire, and justly hope from the present Bishops. And this is no more than what is in your Power to do.

IV. A due Care of the Lives of the Clergy, and to see that they Reside on their Cures and do their Duty.

This is a great part of the Bishops work. And they may do very much in it, and the Necessities of the Church and the Souls of Men call for it at your Hands. A wicked Clergy Man does unspeakable Mischief. I know a considerable Town that was some Years since in good order, the People came constantly to Church, and they all did so: At the usual times they came to the Sacrament also. But a lewd and scandalous Minister is now the Incumbent of that Place, one that is often disordered with Drink, and swears commonly. The People are now dispersed: They are run into separate Meetings; and,  
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in a word, the Town is ruined. I know the Truth of this; and can name several Places in your Lordship's Diocese where there is something of this, tho I know no Place where it is so notorious as in that considerable Town. 'Twill be needful that some Remedy be found out for so great an Evil. I will not undertake to Direct your Lordship: 'Tis too evident how much the Church hath lost by such bad Men.

Another Care is that of *Residence*, which is notoriously neglected. There are a great Number of Parishes that have no *resident Minister* or *Curate*. Instead of that the Minister comes or sends every Sunday, and the Parishioners are destitute the rest of the Week. There are many more Parishes which are great, and have a considerable Revenue, which are supplied by some cheap and very unfit Curates; By reason whereof the People are scattered, Parsonage-Houses are dilapidated, Hospitality refused; and, which is the saddest Consideration of all, the Souls neglected. There are a Number of Ministers in *England* that do not Reside on their Livings: Some chuse to live from their People.

ple in some great Towns at a distance for the sake of Conversation, or Air, or upon some other Pretence: Some become Curates or Lecturers in other Places, and forsake their own Charge: Some are at the Universities on pretence of better fitting themselves: Some lie about *London*, hunting after another Living, or some Lecture there. Some are in the Families of Persons of Honour, others hang about the Court; and some are in Cathedral-Churches in some Employment there, and notoriously neglect their cure of Souls in the mean time. I know some that are perfect Strangers to their People that see them not in several Years, and upon the matter never preach with them. I know a Person that hath one of the best Livings in *England*, and hath had for sixteen Years last past, and never preached among them; not for want of Ability, or Leisure, or because he hath any other Cure, or Publick Employment, but because he is not reconciled to the Labour of his Calling. I could enlarge very much on this Head, and yet not borrow Materials from others. I have seen and do very well know many of the Neglects of this kind. I am amazed when I seriously consider it, and wonder

der how these Men can look up to Heaven, or with what Brow they can look honest Men in the Face when they are conscious of so great a Sin? 'Tis time for the Bishops to look after this Matter, as they would not have the Blood of the neglected Souls lie upon them.

But your Lordship will say, How can this be prevented? For a great Number of these Persons have Qualifications and Dispensations, and some others are absent for Health, or Studies, and other reasonable Causes.

To which I answer, That this will not excuse them that have no reasonable Cause for their Absence, nor any longer than that Cause continues. I know several Men that live at the Universities to a considerable Age, and are never like to be more fit than they are. These Men ought to go to their Cures, and so should those Men too, who withdrew for want of Health when their Health is restored. The Dispensations to hold two Livings will not excuse a Man from not residing upon either. And that hath too often been the Case. Besides, 'tis very fit those Dispensations

ons should be very rarely given, and 'tis in the Power of the Archbishop to restrain them. 'Tis no creditable thing for a Man to need a Dispensation generally speaking; And tho' where one Living is not a Maintenance, and another small one is near it, a Dispensation to hold those two may be a very allowable thing, yet this will not excuse the promiscuous allowance of Dispensations. I know a great Number of Men that have Plurality of the best Livings, and those too at a considerable distance; and the same Men that have two great Livings apiece, have many of them besides one, some two or three Dignities apiece. Great have been the Mischiefs of *Non Obstante's* and *Dispensations*. They were first used in the Court of *Rome*. 'Twas an ill President and Mischievous to all the Commonwealths of Christendom. For the Temporal Princes perceiving that the Pope dispensed with Canons, in imitation thereof have used their Prerogative to Dispense with their Penal Laws and Statutes, when as before they caused their Laws to be Religiously observed, like the Laws of *Medes* and *Persians*, which cannot be dispensed with. For this reason it was that a *Canonist* said, *Dispensatio*

Vid. Godolphin. Repertor. Canon. p. 300.

*satio est vulnus quod vulberat ius commune.* Another saith, That all Abuses of this kind would be reformed, *Si duo tantum verba [non Obstante] non Impedirent.* And Matth. Paris, having recited certain Decrees made in the Council of Lyons, which were beneficial for the Church of England, addeth, *Sed hæc omnia & alia per hoc repagulum [non Obstante] infirmantur.*

After all 'tis certain, that there are very many *Non-residents* who have no Dispensation, nor Excuse that is reasonable. 'Tis pity but these should be obliged to reside, or proceeded against according to the Statutes in that behalf. If they were duly punished, according to Law, we should soon find the good Effects of it.

I have heard some wise Men affirm, who understand the present Posture of things in the City of London, that there are a considerable Number of Men there, who are Curates, or Lecturers, or Readers, or at least Candidates for such Places, that have Cures in the Country which they leave, and some of those Cures not well provided for. If

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this be so, I am sure 'tis a great Evil: But this is an Evil easily cured. The Bishop of London may put a stop to it when he pleaseth. And I believe he will do it; because I know he is a Prelate of great Vertue, of most Exemplary Diligence and Care; and of so great Wisdom besides, that he cannot but discern the Mischievous Effects of such a Permission. Were he put in Mind of this Matter, certainly he would never License any Curate or Lecturer there who had a Cure elsewhere. And did he once take up this Resolution, he would soon discourage this sort of Men. 'Tis of vast Consequence that the City of London should be well supplied: And that it may be, without employing Men that have Cure of Souls already. And this I must needs say, That tho' I have sometimes heard that there are such Men employed in the City, I cannot believe they are Approved or Licensed by that Eminent Bishop.

But your Lordship is not only to take Care that your Clergy *Reside*, but that they do their *Duty* also: And that amounts to a great deal more than *Preaching every Sunday*,  
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and Reading Prayers on *Wednesdays*, *Fridays*, and *Holy-days*. Sick People are to be visited, the Poor to be provided for, young Ones to be instructed, the Good to be encouraged, the Afflicted to be comforted, the Criminals to be admonished, the Contentious to be reconciled.

There are many Emergencies to be provided for. The Minister is the common Father of his People. He is always wanted, and the utmost Care he can take, the most Time he can spare will be all little enough to spend among them. The very Catechizing the Youth of his Parish, preparing them for Confirmation first, and then for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will require great Thought and Pains. The bare saying the Catechism is not enough. They must be brought to understand their Religion, and made sensible how much 'tis their Interest and their Duty. The least Parish will need the Presence and Labour of its Pastor. This is not to be left to a raw Curate. We affront Almighty God by taking this Course, and do in this greatest Concern what is never allowed in things of less Moment.



When we have retained a learned Physician, or Lawyer, we will not give them the liberty to substitute and put upon us some unskilful Apothecary, or young Attorney. Our Concerns are of greater Value than to be thus left. And sure our Souls are of greater Worth than our Lives or Estates.

V. A greater Care concerning *Confirmation* of those who have not been confirmed before. The Truth of it is, that this hath been often *buddled* over, and with little Fruit. Whereas it is not only an excellent Institution of it self, but may be so managed also as to be of unspeakable Use. Those that are to be Confirmed had need be prepared for it, and the Thing ought to be done with great Solemnity. To that purpose I humbly offer the following Particulars to your Lordship's Consideration.

*First*, That there should be Notice given of a Confirmation some considerable time before, and that the Minister be required to Prepare the Youth of his Parish for it; That he have Notice to Instruct them with



with great Care, not only in the bare getting the Catechism by Heart, but in enabling them to give such an Account of the Meaning of what they say, and so possessing them with the Obligation lying upon them from their Baptismal Vow, that they may be fitly disposed to receive great Benefit thereby.

*Secondly,* That none be offered to the Bishop but such as the Minister of the Parish hath thus prepared. And to this purpose the Minister may be obliged to deliver to the Bishop a List or Catalogue of those who are to be Confirmed by him, together with a Certificate under his Hand and Seal at the bottom of it; in which he shall Testify that he hath Examined and does Approve of the Persons above-named in Number ..... and judgeth them fit to be Confirmed. It is to be supposed no Minister will give this Certificate without good Cause. However the Bishop may upon occasion so order the matter, that he may have some of them for trial Examined before they are Confirmed, that he may find out the Fraud if he think it fit, and have any cause to fear due Care hath  
not

not been taken. By this course they who are to be Confirmed may be called by Name, and the Bishop will not be crowded by those who are not Instructed, and by those who have been Confirmed before. For it hath been observed, that many will be Confirmed often, and many others before they are Instructed, and others that are so young that they cannot understand what they do.

*Thirdly,* 'Tis very fit there should be a Sermon preached on this Solemn Occasion, setting forth the Grounds upon which Confirmation is Built, the Advantages of it, with a particular Address to those who are to be Confirmed; or else the Preacher may discourse of the Baptismal Vow, and of the Reasonableness of taking that Obligation upon our selves, which was promised in our Infancy by our Sureties: But your Lordship may chuse a wise and good Man for this Service, and then he will be at no loss for his Argument.

*Fourthly,* Your Lordship may consider also, whether it might not be fit some little Book should be devised by common Consent of the

the Bishops, which might be of after-use to them who are Confirmed; which Book may be delivered to each of them at the time of their Confirmation, *gratis*, ( by the Bishop's own Hand ) with an Obligation laid upon them to read it. In this Book there ought to be some Prayers, and Instructions towards the Preparing for the Holy Sacrament.

*Fifthly*, The several Ministers are to be strictly charged to have a watchful Eye over those who are thus Confirmed, and to Prepare them for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as soon after as is fit and convenient.

These are my sudden Thoughts of this Matter. Your Lordship is the best Judge of the whole. Thus much is certain, that if this Care were taken, or some better, those who now despise it would be very glad of this blessed Opportunity of engaging Themselves, their Children, and their Servants, to the Obedience of Christ and his Holy Laws. This Service might be so managed that it would be of great Use to the Souls of Men.

*Sixthly*,

*Sixthly*, There ought to be the utmost *Care* taken of Market-Towns that they be well provided (if possible) with able Ministers, and Men of a good Life, and Men that shall preach twice a-day also. For if they be well provided, the little Parishes about them will be the better for it. For as good Preaching in *London* (a Place of great Resort from all Parts of the Kingdom) hath a mighty Influence upon the whole Nation, so in proportion it must be in all Market-Towns, to which the Country People come, and the Ministers of the Villages also. A wise Man there is consulted upon Occasion by the other Clergy-Men; and a great Example of Vertue in an Eminent Place goes farther than the same in a Village, or little Hamlet. I confess the Maintenance here is generally small, but then they ought to be encouraged by what other Helps the Bishops can afford them; And some of the Bishops have Prebends and other small Dignities to bestow, which cannot be better placed than upon the worthy Ministers of such Places; who as they have the greater Charge and Work, so ought to have the greater Encouragement. Besides, these are the Places  
where

where the Dissenters; that preach, generally are. And indeed here are the greatest Number generally of that sort of People. I have known several of these Places preserved from Schism and Faction by watchful, and diligent, and prudent Pastors; and (I speak it with grief) a great many of them miserably divided from our Church through the Negligence, and Folly, and Wickedness of their Ministers: Some of which have refused to Preach in an Afternoon, when it hath been much desired; others have spent their Pains in the Pulpit generally in bitter Invectives against the Dissenters; others have gone beyond the Rubrick, and refused to please their People where they might have done it without breaking any Law; some have sided with Parties, and instead of ending Differences have been of a certain Party in them; and others have contended with their Neighbours for Trifles, falling into Heats with them, and then have refused to Visit them or do them Civil Offices. The Dissenters have taken Occasion to set up Preaching in their Towns and drawn away their People. The Schism hath hereby grown great, and the Minister himself hath had too

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much

much hand in it, notwithstanding his warm  
 Declarations against it. My Heart akes when  
 I seriously think of this. And 'twill be worth  
 the utmost Care of all the Bishops how to  
 get this Evil at least lessened, if not quite re-  
 moved. The Care of these great Places con-  
 cerns the whole, and 'twill become the Bi-  
 shops to find some way by themselves, or  
 their Interest at Court, or elsewhere, to pro-  
 cure some additional Maintenance for those  
 who are Diligent and Painful in these Places.  
 Great Cities and Towns ( and the Universi-  
 ties especially ) most need warm and power-  
 ful Preachers, and 'twill be great Charity to  
 provide them with such. And thus, my Lord,  
 I have spoken my Mind frankly. Some per-  
 haps will think I have used too great Liber-  
 ty: Nor shall I wonder at it: For perhaps I  
 have not considered you in this Letter as my  
 Diocesan, but have used that Freedom which  
 I was wont to use with you when I knew you  
 in the University. If I have done so, 'tis not  
 for want of Deference for your Person and  
 your Character.

I make no question but when you come among us, and in your Visitation, you will answer the expectations of your Friends, and at least silence your Enemies. I doubt not but you will do all you can (and you may do much by your Example and Authority) to make us better, and to work a Reformation, which all good Men expect and desire. You will find many of your Clergy very complying in those excellent Designs. If you mind them of their Duty (as I am sure you will) I dare assure you of a great Number ready to assist you.

'Tis high time to be doing that great Work which you intend. There are a considerable Number that expect your Commands, and greatly hope you will vigorously Encourage us to look after our Cures, to Instruct our Youth, to set up Prayers in all the Families of our Parishioners, and to preach up the Necessity of Reformation, and preach against the Vices that reign amongst us, and to do it with great Care and Application.



I am very certain (as bad as the World  
is) that by this Method you will be an In-  
strument of much Good to the Souls of  
Men. That you may be so, is the most ear-  
nest Prayer of,

but you will do all you can (and  
(do much by your Example and Authority)  
to make us better, and to work a Reforma-  
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March 26.

1692.

Your Lordship's

Most Obedient Servant,

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